## Free Press Staff Report

The Vermont congressional delegation's fingerprints are all over Wall Street reform legislation agreed to early Friday morning.

Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., and Rep. Peter Welch, D-Vt., each were involved in authoring amendments included in the final legislation, and Leahy was on the conference committee of senators and members of congress that agreed on the final language.

Leahy's amendments would increase the tools available to law enforcement to root out and prosecute financial and securities fraud. The amendment will also strengthen protections for whistleblowers who help expose financial fraud.

"In recent years, a massive wave of fraud on Wall Street and beyond has contributed greatly to the current economic crisis, which has eviscerated the life savings of hardworking Americans," Leahy said in a news release. "We must act to protect taxpayers from ongoing fraud that could slow our economic recovery. Criminals who jeopardize our financial institutions and break the law must be investigated, prosecuted, and held accountable for their actions. I am glad there is support in both the Senate and House for these bipartisan provisions."

Meanwhile, the Federal Reserve will get authority to limit interchange, or "swipe" fees, that merchants pay for each debit-card transaction. The measure was pushed Welch and championed by Sen. Richard Durbin, D-III. It allows retailers to refuse credit cards for purchases under \$10 and offer discounts based on the form of payment.